

Baxter’s work ethic produces pop, prowess

CPL. THOMAS PERRY
EDITOR

“You teach me baseball and I’ll teach you relativity...Know we must not, you will learn about relativity faster than I learn baseball.”

- Albert Einstein

For some athletes, sports come as naturally as walking. Those few men and women are born with an innate ability to adapt to any physical challenge and overcome. They are not students of the game because they are themselves the teachers. Practice and repetition are unnecessary as they forge their way to the pinnacle of the sporting world.

Alonzo Baxter is not one of those athletes. He is, by all accounts, an incredible softball player who possesses a sweet swing and a cannon in lieu of right arm. He consistently hits a slow-pitched softball more than 350 feet and rarely makes an out for either the Nads, his intramural team on the Depot, or any of the semi-professional teams he plays for in the civilian world. He can field any position on the diamond well, and now evades injuries like a father of five without insurance.

But Baxter was not always the star of the diamond. He has played sports since he was 7 years old, but his natural ability only carried him so far.

“You don’t have to be huge to hit a softball a long way,” said Baxter, which is easy to say when you are a 6-foot-2-inch, 200-pound wall of muscle, but he began his playing career at a wiry weight of just 160 pounds. “Time and effort separate a good player from a great player.”

Along with adding 40 pounds of muscle, Baxter’s incredible commitment to his sport has simplified his outlook on softball success.

“Hitting a softball is easy,” said Baxter, who admitted that he takes 100-150 batting practice swings three times a week. “Hitting it hard and a long ways is a combination of bat speed, timing, pitch selection and practice.”

Baxter’s work ethic and attitude were not always positive aspects for him. When he began his Marine Corps career in 1991, he was 20 years old, athletic and prepared to continue his love affair with baseball through the closest thing the Corps had to offer – softball.

But he possessed one negative trait - a poor attitude - which damaged his on the field performance.

He began his career playing at the intramural level, but his talent soon separated him from his peers, and he was invited to tryout for the All-Marine Softball Team from



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Alonzo Baxter has displayed some of the greatest power the league has seen this season.

1993 through 1995. He was cut from the team each time. During those three years of tryouts, Baxter was plagued by injuries, and he again displayed a poor attitude that he attributed to inexperience.

Then, Baxter underwent a life-changing experience when he spent three years on the drill field from 1996-1998. He wasn’t able to tryout for the All-Marine Team during those years, but he began spending countless hours in the gym and transforming his once overtly poor attitude.

“I matured,” said Baxter. “I went to the drill field and learned discipline. I was getting older ... It was time to grow up.”

He grew up, out and over the fence. For once he returned to the softball field, he was bigger, more relaxed and he began to launch balls into the stratosphere.

His success at the All-Marine tryouts also took a turn for the better as Baxter made the team three years in a row (1999-2001), including a spot on the All-Armed Forces Softball Team in 2000.

“The last two times I went to [the All-Marine tryouts] I knew I was the best player on the field,” said Baxter, who wasn’t trying to sound arrogant. “That is the attitude you have to have. You don’t go around telling everybody else that you are the best, but it is all about your own mental toughness.”

Baxter’s toughness has produced an amazing year offensively in the Depot’s Intramural League, including a two-game run where he batted 10-11 with 10

home runs and two walks. He has become a thoroughbred in a league of ponies.

He is too big for the league as his arms are too big for his jersey, but he also lends his talents to a semi-professional team out of Massachusetts called Lazar Vision, which competes in national tournaments against other teams from around the nation.

Baxter is now 32 years old and in the prime of his career. He will undoubtedly continue to experience success on the field until he decides to hang up his cleats and pursue his next dream of coaching the All-Marine Team. In the athletic world, he has everything, but, until recently, he was missing something from his personal life.

Baxter was married this summer, but his softball career did not skip a beat.

“My wife has never had a problem with me playing softball,” said Baxter. “When we first met I told her, I am not into any crazy stuff, but softball is one thing I like to do.”

The perfect marriage between softball, a man and a woman was formed. It is a beautiful thing ... watching Baxter smash a 400-foot homerun over the centerfield fence. Anyone can do it. You just have to add 40 pounds of muscle, practice five hours a week and have a significant other who does not have a problem with you traveling all over the country just to play a game.

Some things are easier said than swung.

Wawas bruise Hospital, 15-5

Wawas finally field full line-up as playoff stretch begins

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The Wawas nickel-and-dimed their way to a 15-5 victory over Hospital at the Depot Softball Fields Sept. 15. The Wawas failed to have any offensively explosive innings, but consistently put runs on the board every time they came to the plate.

First baseman Mark Fisher led the Wawas slow charge, going 4-4 with three RBIs. Fisher's accomplishments at the plate were more impressive than a typical 4-4 performance because he was hobbled by an injury. He was in so much pain that the lumbering ball player was barely able to make it to first base after he struck base-knock after base-knock.

Wawas' shortstop Alex Martin was another key performer in his team's victory. Martin, whose suspect play in the infield has cost his team many runs during the season, was given an opportunity in the leadoff spot against Hospital. Martin took full advantage going 4-5 with three runs scored.

Hospital lacked its normal offensive punch for the first time in weeks. They had been consistently scoring upward of 20 runs a game, but in this contest they struggled to get men on base, let alone score.

Despite the loss, the Hospital has played well most of the year and has to be considered one of the favorites to claim the second season's championship.

Nads crush FTC, 29-14

The Nads defeated FTC with raw power, belting seven homeruns on their way to a 29-14 victory at the Depot Softball Fields Sept. 15.

In his final game before departing for the

civilian world, Ashley Crosby said few words and let his bat do most of the talking. Crosby, who will not be available for the Nads playoff run, went 4-4 with three home runs, a walk and five runs scored.

Aiding Crosby in his long-ball send-off was Alonzo Baxter, the Nads powerful outfielder who is usually the Nads' only regular source for the long ball. Baxter went 2-2 with two home runs, three intentional walks and five runs scored.

"[Lindsay] doesn't usually hit the ball that far. We're happy if he can get it out of the infield. If that old man can hit one out, I think we need to think about moving the fences back."

- Ashley Crosby, the Nads second baseman

ing the rest of the game.

The Nads did not have that problem. They used the first two innings as a springboard and continued to score in bunches. Jeffrey Bird and Allen Lindsay both added homers for the Nads going 4-5 with a home run, a double, two singles and three runs scored, and 4-5 with a home run, three singles and four runs scored respectively.

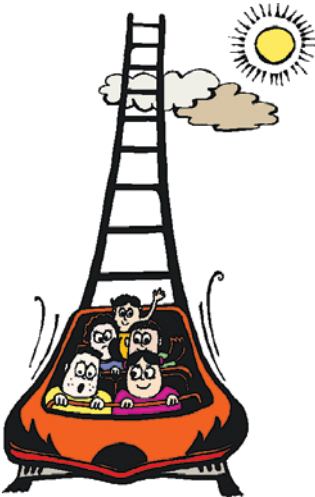
Bird has displayed power in the past, but when Lindsay sent a shot well over the left-field fence, his teammates rose in unison and cheered more out of shock than out of excitement.

"[Lindsay] doesn't usually hit the ball that far," said Crosby. "We're happy if he can get it out of the infield. If that old man can hit one out, I think we need to think about moving the fences back."

League officials are looking into rumors that the ball Lindsay hit out was rubber. Lindsay could not be reached for comment.

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